

Message Text

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43

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-15 /069 W

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P R 061410Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9515

INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

UNCLAS HELSINKI 0023

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, FI, US, UR

SUBJECT: FINNISH NEWSPAPERS CARRY STORIES ALLEGING FINNISH
COLLUSION WITH CIA IN AIDING SOVIET DEFECTORS ESCAPE
IN 1961

1. BOTH CONSERVATIVE/INDEPENDENT AAMULEHTI (TAMPERE) AND
TABLOID INDEPENDENT AFTERNOONER ILTA-SANOMAT JANUARY 6 CARRIED
STORIES ALLEGING THAT A FINNISH COLONEL IN 1961 HAD HELPED
CIA AGENTS WHO ARRANGED EXCAPE OF SOVIET DEFECTOR'S FAMILY
TO THE WEST THROUGH FINLAND.

2. STORIES ARE BASED ON SPECIAL SUNDAY SUPPLEMENT IN JAN. 5
STOCKHOLM NEWSPAPER DAGENS NYHETER, WHICH IN TURN APPARENTLY
TAKEN FROM AN ACCOUNT BY RETIRED COLONEL STEPHEN J. MEADE,
61, ALLEGEDLY FORMER CIA AGENT, WHICH APPEARED IN MILES COPELAND'S
BOOK ENTITLED THE REAL SPY WORLD. MEADE'S CODE NAME WAS
REPORTEDLY "WHISTLER."

3. STORIES ALLEGE THAT IN 1961 SOVIET EMBASSY SECRETARY
VASILI GEORGEVICH ULYANOV, BASED IN ATHENS, DEMANDED THAT
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HIS FAMILY BE GOTTEN OUT OF THE USSR BEFORE HE WOULD DEFECT.

MEADE CLAIMS TO HAVE ACCOMPLISHED THIS TASK, INVOLVING SMUGGLING ULYANOV'S WIFE AND THREE DAUGHTERS OUT TO THE WEST THROUGH FINLAND. MEADE'S ACCOUNT TELLS OF AN ADVENTUROUS TRIP THROUGH THE USSR, WHICH INVOLVED KILLING ONE KGB AGENT AND PUTTING OUT OF ACTION ONE SOVIET BORDER GUARD. ASSISTING MEADE WERE REPORTEDLY FINNISH-BORN US MAJOR VILHO RAHIKAINEN (WHO HAD EMIGRATED TO US AT AGE 16 BUT KNEW BOTH FINNISH AND RUSSIAN), AND ESTONIAN LIAISON MAN MIKA RIITROJA. THE PARTY, ACCORDING TO STORY, CROSSED INTO FINLAND BY BOAT ON A BORDER LAKE NEAR SORTAVALA. THE STORY HAS IT THAT PARTY WAS THEN APPREHENDED BY FINNISH SOLDIERS AND INTERROGATED. MOVED LATER TO SOME LARGER PLACE, PARTY WAS CONFRONTED BY SAME FINNISH COLONEL WHO HAD INTERROGATED THEM, BUT WHO NOW IN GOOD ENGLISH SAID HE WANTED TO INTRODUCE TWO GOOD FRIENDS OF HIS, JERRY AND MAC FROM THE US EMBASSY IN HELSINKI. MEADE'S ACCOUNT IS REPORTED TO SAY THAT JERRY AND MAC WERE CIA MEN AND THE FINNISH COLONEL WAS THEIR FRIEND AND HAD WORKED WITH THEM FOR YEARS.

4. ILTA-SANOMAT APPARENTLY TRIED TO CHECK OUT STORY WITH FINNISH AUTHORITIES. IT REPORTS THAT SUOPO (FINNISH SECURITY POLICE) AND ARMY HEADQUARTERS DOUBT THE VERACITY OF MEADE'S STORY. SUOPO DEPUTY DIRECTOR SEPPO PYLKKANEN IS REPORTED AS SAYING THAT HE STILL WANTS TO CHECK OUT SOME DETAILS IN DAGENS NYHETER STORY BEFORE MAKING ANY COMMENT. CAPTAIN PERTTI LINNA OF THE BORDER GUARD HEADQUARTERS IS REPORTED TO HAVE REFUSED DIRECT COMMENT ON STORIES, BUT SAID THAT "NOTHING LIKE THIS OR EVEN REMOTELY SIMILAR HAS HAPPENED AT THE SAID TIME OR AT ANY OTHER TIME."

5. IF ASKED, EMBASSY PLANS FOLLOW USUAL PRACTICE OF NOT COMMENTING ON ANY STORY CONTAINING ALLEGATIONS OF CIA INVOLVEMENT.
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